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Cyborg and Religious? Technonature and Technoculture*

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Abstract. We are all aware that our idea of natural/unnatural has been changing over the centuries. According to Donna Haraway, we must exit the maze of dualisms that has marred the relationships between human and non-human nature for centuries. Cyborg is a figure of speech and asymbol, but preeminently a description of our actual being in contemporary technonature. Her idea has been picked up by artists (e.g. Lynn Randolph, Patricia Piccinini) and philosophers and theologians. The cyborgian organism/human and the world cannot be articulated in terms of black-and-white, us and them, friend and foe, kin and alien, good and evil etc. Our technonatural creatures require our care and love, curiosity and investigation, and there will always be unexpected consequences.

Keywords: cyborg; symbol; technonature; challenges to theology and anthropology; Haraway; Tillich; Piccinini.

"We all live with a concrete awareness that we cannot say No to science, technology, and medicine. Even if we wanted to, we cannot say No to the medical complex that appropriates our bodies, defines our state of health, and positions us in a continuum of fitness from the temporarily abled to

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the permanently disabled. […] But how can we go about understanding and taking account of these deep and abiding presences in our bodies, our persons, our selves? Furthermore, how are we to understand our other often intense hunger to say Yes?" (Downey & Dumit 1998, 5)

I am talking about cyborgs, as the possibility and reality to many 21st century people. I talk about cyborgs, following Donna Haraway, and NOT about the transhuman or robotics or artificial intelligence. All these employ radically differing philosophical and ethical commitments. Although the term posthuman can be understood as a more general one than cyborg (Antje Jackelén and some others have used also the notion of technosapiens[1]), I like the term and image, metaphor and figuration of the cyborg, because it is such a potent symbol of the difference effected by technology between the human and the posthuman. Haraway's original definition and manifesto-style explanation was published as "Manifesto for Cyborgs: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the 1980s" in 1985, and it has been anthologized in slightly different versions in numerous collections of articles ever since. In her words: "A cyborg is a cybernetic organism, a hybrid of machine and organism, a creature of social reality as well as a creature of fiction." (Haraway 1991, 149). In the figure of the cyborg, the human is physically intertwined with the nonhuman, the organic with the mechanical (cybernetic machine). It is a metaphor and figuration, it can count as a symbol, but it is also lived experience that changes what counts as a human being. It takes both the organic and the technological to have a cyborg!

It may seem strange to propose that Christian theologians should ponder the concept of the cyborg but it hardly seems strange to suggest that Christian theologians should concern themselves with what it means to be human. The cyborg is not following indiscriminately the posthuman possibilities and discourses, the cyborg does not need to be a human even! In fact, nobody knows what the posthuman means. However, the term posthuman has emerged as a way to describe a new and growing appreciation for

[1] Antje Jackelén, "The Image of God as Techno Sapiens." *Zygon: Journal of Religion and Science* 37 (2002): 289–302.

the plasticity and flexibility of „human nature", spurred by discoveries in biotechnology and virtual, information and communication technologies. Posthuman has become a way of naming the unknown, possible, (perhaps) future, altered identity of human beings, as we incorporate various technologies into our human bodies and selves. It therefore functions as an umbrella term, covering a span of related concepts: genetically enhanced persons, artificial persons or androids, uploaded consciousness, cyborgs and chimeras (mechanical or genetic hybrids). Thus, the posthuman is not any one particular thing; it is an act of projection, of speculation about who we are as human beings, and who we might become. Posthuman is inherently plural, a disturbing ambivalence. It is both liberating and oppressive in its multiple possibilities. Technological advances make promises of better health, elimination of geneticlly heritable disease, longer lifespans, and perhaps even enhanced capabilities, but at the same time also represent an invasion of bodily integrity, as well as economic and political exploitation and oppression. It seems possible that both the promises and the threats will manifest themselves in equal measure.

The image of the cyborg has been employed for various kinds of theoretical work, not surprisingly in feminist science fiction and cyber-punk but also in geography, literary and religious studies and theology.

For a theologian it is still useful to discuss symbols with the help of Paul Tillich. In his essay from 1957, "Symbols of Faith", he refers to the following characteristics of symbols:

1. A symbol "points beyond itself to something else."
2. It participates in that to which it points.
3. A symbol "opens up levels of reality which otherwise are closed to us."
4. It "unlocks dimensions and elements of our soul which correspond to the dimensions and elements of reality".
5. Symbols cannot be produced intentionally, or invented. They grow out of the individual or collective unconscious and must be accepted by the collective unconscious of the group in which they appear.

Haraway's understanding of figure and figuration rests on readings of literary theory and philosophy, and the 18th century meaning of the "figu-

ration" as "chimerical vision" is still implicit in her sense of figure. Figures have also another particular task. "Figures collect the people through their invitation to inhabit the corporeal story told in their lineaments. Figures are not representations or didactic illustrations, but rather material-semiotic nodes or knots in which diverse bodies and meanings coshape one another" (Haraway 2008, 4).

What Paul Tillich adds, is the religious understanding of the cyborg as a symbol: religion cannot do without symbols, because religion has to do with ultimacy. Tillich remarks that "the true ultimate transcends the realm of finite reality infinitely. Therefore, no finite reality can express it directly and properly." (Tillich 1957, 44). Thus we need symbols to speak about the deepest realities in life and about God.

The move to speak of cyborg as a symbol allows us to acknowledge the reality of our actual embodiment. The cyborg is not most importantly information about us human beings but rather the shape our actual humanity takes today. It is a proposal for understanding the fundamentals of human nature. These fundamentals include our biocultural and dual nature. Our cultural and technological nature is as indispensable for our survival as our biological nature – it is a knot in which bodies and meanings coshape or cocreate one another.

Feminist theorist Donna Haraway's work on the symbol of the cyborg has proved seminal, as Haraway's landmark essay, „A Cyborg Manifesto," ((1985), 1991) has become a reference point for discussions of the posthuman. Haraway herself has moved on from the figure of the cyborg – now characterized by her as "junior siblings" – and has been emphasizing the companion species. The philosophical and ethical issues she identifies in the „Manifesto" have been taken up by other scholars.

In „A Cyborg Manifesto" (Haraway 1991, 149–181) Haraway builds on a critique of feminist essentialism, in which the identity of woman qua woman is assumed to be naturally given, self-evident, and unchanging. She points out that challenging patriarchal and colonial essentializing tendencies eventually leads to the conclusion that all claims of identity based on a natural or organic standpoint are suspect. This is her reason for choosing

the cyborg as a feminist symbol; identifying herself as „cyborg" is Haraway's symbolic shorthand for the rejection of any attempt to define human identity on the basis of „nature". This basic stance is the key critique of Haraway's posthuman discourse on human nature, a deliberate breakdown of the dichotomy between nature and technology. One of the main tasks of the cyborg was to reanimate feminist encounters with the sciences and, in particular, to stake a feminist claim in constructions of nature.

1. What or who is Cyborg?

A cyborg is a hybrid figure: neither wholly organic nor solely mechanical, the cyborg is both simultaneously, straddling these taken-for-granted ontological and social categories. It is this hybrid aspect of cyborg existence that holds simulatenously so much threat and promise. Human beings construct social categories as a way of ordering our coexistence, and often experience the transgression of the boundaries of those categories as the threat of primordial chaos unleashing itself into our lives. And yet, those who find themselves outside the clean definitions of those social categories experience the transgression of them as a promise of liberation. Cyborg has become the label for a profound myth, hope and fear specific to the late modernity.

Haraway identifies three „breached boundaries", represented by the cyborg: human/animal, organism/machine, and (as subset of the second) physical/nonphysical. These identified boundaries constitute the defining content of „human nature," and therefore the breaching of them constitutes the challenge of posthuman to the concept of human nature.

Haraway states matter-of-factly that „by the late twentieth century in United States scientific culture, the boundary between human and animal is thoroughly breached." (Haraway 1991, 151) Yet, as her brief remarks make clear, it is not so much the advent of the cyborg, or even the science and technologies which make it possible, which has initiated this breach. Rather, it is simply the cumulative result of continuing biological research into evolutionary theory over the last 200 years. Many people, she claims,

are no longer invested in such a stark separation of human and nonhuman animal, and yet, of course, there is also a strong resistance to evolutionary theory, particularly evident within U.S culture.

The human/animal boundary breach is symbolized by the cyborg's posthuman cousin, the chimera. A classic Greek mythical ontological category, the chimera is now redefined as a genetic mixture of two animal species, and represents the ultimate blurring of classificatory species boundaries. Genetic engineering is so resulting perhaps even in a more spectacular and emotionally forceful way the breaching as more obviously mechanical cyborg technologies.

The second breached boundary identified by Haraway is organism and machine. Here, the cyborg is the result of the breached human/machine boundary, a fusion of organic life and mechanical object. Despite our instinct to classify the cyborg an inhabitant of the imaginative worlds of science fiction, literal cyborgs abound: simple medical devices such as pacemakers, and more complicated medical devices such as prostheses or the ECMO („extracorporeal membrane oxygenation," a medical device which performs respiratory and blood pumping/scrubbing functions externally from the body) or dialysis, join the organic human body to create an integrated system in which organic functions are regulated, restored, or replaced. These integrations may not be quite seamless ones we envision for the future, but they nonetheless meet the basic criterion of melding together, in some sense, the organic human body with mechanical device.

2. Ironic Contradictions

The cyborg was part of a military project, part of an extraterrestrial man-in-space project. It was also a science fictional figure, in a macho form as well as objects of machinic, pornographic "iron maidens". The term „cyborg" was coined in 1960 by Manfred Clynes and Nathan Kline (Rockland State University), to refer to their concept of a mechanically enhanced or altered human being who could survive extraterrestrial environments. Their proposal, presented first at the Psychophysiological Aspects of Space

Flight Symposium and published in an article called "Cyborgs and Space," in the journal *Astronautics'* September issue)[2] defined cyborgs simply as „self-regulating man-machine systems". As philosopher and cognitive scientist Andy Clark observes, the original 1960 vision of the cyborg was formulated precisely to *liberate* the human agent by allowing machine control to create additional layers of homeostatic functioning. Clynes and Kline wrote, „If man [sic] in space, in addition to flying his vehicle, must continuously be checking on things and making adjustments merely to keep himself alive, he becomes a slave to the machine. The purpose of the cyborg .... is to provide an organizational system in which such robot-like problems were taken care of automatically, leaving man free to explore, to create, to think and to feel" (quoted from Clark 2003, 32). Thus, ironically, though the goal of Clynes and Kline's cyborg proposal was actually an enhanced freedom for the human person, the means by which they sought to secure the freedom from bodily distractions now seems to potentially threaten the autonomy of will which they presume.

This ironic contradiction at the heart of the original cyborg proposal is traced out in Chris H. Gray's analysis of the coping mechanisms of „medical cyborgs," individuals either temporarily or permanently dependent on machines to perform bodily functions for their survival, which explores the ways that this confusion of ontological and bodily boundaries affects the psyche. Technology brings freedom to the damaged organism but also creates dependence – medical cyborgs are aware that this liberation is the result of a dependence on mechanism that cannot ignored or denied (Gray 1996). At least potentially, Haraway's cyborg gains agency rather than losing it, as a result of the new possibilities, alternatives, and alliances opened up by the breach of the human/machine boundary.

The third boundary breakdown is between organism and machine, the physical and nonphysical. This is not a commentary on materiality and

[2] A later paper "Sentic Space Travel", authored by Manfred E. Clynes on the invitation of the Journal *Astronautics* in 1970 but not actually published then, was published (along with the reprint of the "Cyborgs and Space" and an interview with Clynes by Chris Hables Gray) in Chris Hables Gray, with the assistance of Heidi J. Figueroa-Sarriera & Steven Mentor (eds.), *The Cyborg Handbook* (New York & London: Routledge, 1995).

spirituality. Rather, as Haraway's brief comments make clear, this is a way of describing how our machines and technologies have become in an important sense „invisible". In many ways, unlike the conscious struggle to renegotiate bodily boundaries vis-a-vis the integration of medical devices described before, the human-machine interface has become so simple, habitual, and ubiquitous that we scarcely notice our daily dependence on technologies for communication, transportation, and the supply of basic human needs. Haraway write, „Our best machines are made of sunshine; they are all light and clean because they are nothing but signals, electromagnetic waves, a section of a spectrum, and these machines are eminently portable, mobile… People are nowhere near as fluid, being both material and opaque" (Haraway 1991, 153). These literally invisible (virtual, wireless) technologies affect us most profoundly, because they are so transparent in usage. The efficacy of such technologies lies precisely in their invisibility, in the way they integrate themselves into our daily lives and habits and shape our patterns of thought and relationships, without our conscious notice of them. Constantly improved interfaces make these devices more user-friendly by requiring less conscious attention and fewer acquired skills in order to be effective. That is to say, technological improvement often translates into increased invisibility.

Often cyborgs and other posthuman hybrids are seen as figures of the monstrous, moral abominations resulting from the transgression of ontological boundaries. Just as a common ancestry with nonhuman animals seems to threaten the ontological distinctiveness of humanity, so too can the technological innovation of the cyborg, as it presumes an ontological kinship with the nonhuman machine. E.g. the figure of Borg in the 1990s TV series *Star Trek: the Next Generation*, provides an iconic example of the monstrous posthuman. The Borg is portrayed as a collective consciousness, with multiple, basically identical, organic bodies fully integrated with cybernetic prostheses and utterly lacking individual differentiation. Visually, the Borg's technology seems to pierce the flesh in painful, invasive entry points along the body, the collective will of the Borg swamps the individual will just as invasively as its mechanical prostheses pierce the flesh. The Borg's capture

of Captain Picard, who represents the very best of humanity, is therefore the ultimate threat: the extinction of human identity and individuality at the hands of impersonal mechanical, political or technological systems.

This is not so in feminist SF and science fact narratives (Haraway cites the work of Joanna Russ, Octavia E. Butler, Monique Wittig and some others). Here the cyborg figures emerge as heroic protagonists, characters whose defiance of categorical identites is the source of powerful action. Crossing the boundaries is not itself the most exciting thing: the excitement and significance depend on what happens after we have crossed the boundary, on what we make of being across the boundary. The passionate critics of technology or the figuration/symbol of cyborg falsify the real world, human culture and creativity (including creativity in technical realm), they see humans as no more than obedient gardeners-stewards of the natural environment. The passionate admirers may err in their position of being precisely on the opposite side of critics: they also forget the boundary situation, and also the accountability and ambiguity of the cyborg-world. The cyborg was a figure that collected up many things, among them the way that post-World War II technoscientific cultures were deeply shaped by information sciences and biological sciences. Haraway has explained her interest to "conceive all of us as communicative systems, whether we are animate or inanimate, whether we are plants, human beings or the planet herself" (Haraway 2003, 48). Cyborg is an egalitarian project where all and everything can have their say.

When Lutheran theologian Paul Tillich spoke of being on the boundary, he emphasized the conflict between the worlds in his own person, and he speaks of this conflict as "fruitful for thought," "difficult and dangerous," demanding "decisions and thus exclusion of alternatives" (1966, 13). Tillich explores the possibilities of this situation, always under the impact of ambiguity and ambivalence. Haraway explores, conversely, the ambiguity and ambivalence of the boundary, but always under the impact of the possibilities. Situated knowledge and the elsewhere turn out to be epistemologically and metaphysically related, contrary to a simple notion of place and fantasies of the innocence of "the local" in eco-activist discourses.

3. Mother Nature? Technonature?

One way of describing the cyborg's defiance of these ontological boundaries is to call it „unnatural". The hybridity of the cyborg, as well as its manufactured, technological origin, defy the expectation of a single, given, biologically inherited „Nature". In a larger sense, as well, cyborg hybridity also calls into question the concept of „Nature" as the determining origin of given biological natures.

Nature has always been a central topic for Haraway. As more than one scholar has noted, Haraway's scholarly work in the history and philosophy of science, beginning with *Primate Visions: Gender, Race, and Nature in the World of Modern Science* (Routledge, 1989), continuing through her work on technoscience and cyborgs and into her current work on interspecies relations, can be read as her nuanced, multi-leveled response to the question „what gets to count as nature?" As she says, nature is constructed, but not solely by humans; the construction of nature is a project undertaken by human and nonhuman agents. Nature is an imploded, densely packed location. It is the location where attitudes and practices regarding gender, religion, science and technology, politics and family, race and identity come together, to be explained under the same rubric of natural givens and norms. Whatever nature is, it is not a simple given, and Haraway's plea is that we recognize our responsibility in its construction, and our complicity in its destruction. Haraway's second goal, equally important, is to resist reinscribing the same logic through an imposed „nature of no nature", in which all that is nonhuman, dispossessed of previously presumed natural teleology and thus bereft of independent moral status or agency, passively receives the assigned teleology of human technoscience. Instead, she seeks to articulate a position in which the importance of human agency and the constructed nature of ontological categories is evident – and which simultaneously recognizes that human agents are not the only agents present within the realm of technoscience.

Haraway writes in the manifesto that not only is God dead, but so is the goddess. This declaration clearly sets the cyborg in opposition, not just to the culturally dominant and influential Christian narrative, but the reli-

gious articulations of female affinity to nature, in the figures of the goddess or Mother Nature, as well. However, Haraway refuses to allow the easy separation of science and technology from its surrounding culture, including, of course, pervasive Christian influences and various New Age images. She refuses to credit either Nature or Woman as a source of political identity. But her main concern has been to find ways to craft more ethical, livable lives for all human and nonhuman organisms – there is no point of return, "there is no garden and never has been" (Haraway 2004, 83). The reality of nature cannot be apprehended separately from the nature that has been produced through, and by, Western scientific discourses that are themselves contextualized and bounded by histories marked by race, class, and sex. The impossibility of thinking nature (or reality) in isolation, demands the turn to different images and figurations (the cyborg, technonature, naturecultures, being or becoming worldly).

4. Reconfiguring subjectivity and theological interpretations

Haraway describes the human being in her „When Species Meet": „I love the fact that human genomes can be found in only about 10 percent of all the cells that occupy the mundane space I call my body; the other 90 percent of the cells are filled with the genomes of bacteria, fungi, protists, and such, some of which play in a symphony necessary to my being alive at all, and some of which are hitching a ride and doing the rest of me, of us, no harm… " (Haraway 2008, 4). We are „walking, thinking ecologies," as Wesley Wildman says (2010, 165–166), and that in a world in which our walking, thinking, and being intimately depends upon the environmental scaffolding of our technologies. The concept of "the human" is contested, dynamic, and historical. As Haraway writes, "To be one is always to *become with* many" (Haraway 2008, 4).

In contrast to constructions of subjectivity which require humans to define their relationships to machines in ways that preserve conscious agency as the exlusive characteristic of human beings alone, denying the role that machines and other nonhuman components actually play in hu-

man decision-making, from a cyborg/posthuman perspective, „the prospect of humans working in partnership with intelligent machines is not so much a usurpation of human right and responsibility as it is a further development in the construction of distributed cognition environments, a construction that has been going on for thousands of years" (Hayles 1999, 3–4). Further, „when the human is seen as part of a distributed system, the full expression of human capability can be seen precisely to *depend* on the splice rather than being imperiled by it," (Hayles 1999, 290).

What difference does this decentering of the human, in relation to both ecological and technological coordinates, make theologically? As a first observation, (post-)human subjectivity not only dismantles the anthropology of the liberal humanist subject, but the theology of the God to whom that subject was presumably in relation. F. LeRon Shults writes, „we may still ask whether the Bible describes a God whose highest goal is glorifying himself as a single self-conscious Subject" (Shults 2003, 240). Shults argues that a lack of attention to the Trinitarian personal relations of the three persons of God „led to a picture of an infinitely intelligent and powerful Subject who is intent on self-glorification" – a description eerily reminiscent of Haraway's description of the „(im)modest witness of the gentleman scholar in the narratives of the scientific revolution (here, God is not just an old man in the sky, He is a man in a lab coat in the sky; and scientific objectivity is indeed a god-trick). Shults's observation is salutary: if that single self-conscious subject is not who we are, it's not who God is, either.

Secondly, and this has profound implications for Christian spiritual practices and disciplines, this reconfigured posthuman subjectivity creates new space for the articulation of doctrines of prayer, spiritual growth, and the discernment and desiring of „God's will". Dismantling the centered and masterful subject is an affirmative project, ending not in the absence of the subject or its incorporation into the body of nature but in new and positive conceptions of subjectivity. The cyborg demonstrates that things get to be the way they are – whether good, bad, or indifferent – by being put together a bit at a time. The cyborg is a means of reclaiming agency and relationship, not losing them to technological determinism. But it is

an agency whose boundaries are incorporative, not fortified; an agency which invates collaboration rather than insisting on autonomy. This is true on multiple levels: material, ontological, epistemological, social, and political; and here, I believe we may fairly add, theological: as we desire, seek out, and perfect the relationship with God which defines the *imago dei*, we invite the collaboration of divine agency to intertwine with our own.

While there has been a turn to the body in recent decades in theology, attention has been mainly on sexuality and gender. Embodiment, the body, however, – all singular – point to a concept of normative, homogeneous, human embodiedness. Following cyborgs in their everyday life, we know about the breakdown of ontological barriers: the cyborg signals do not take place in the abstraction of academic philosophical or theological discourse about technoscience and anthropology, but within actual bodies and lived experiences. Living as cyborg means recognition that the boundaries constructed to delineate the self cut across the predetermined categories, not as an act of will but as an acknowledgment of the material reality of actual bodies (Thweatt-Bates 2012, 154).

Recent US Hispanic and Latino/a perspectives on theological anthropology place the notion of hybridity to the central place. Specifically Virgilio Elizondo *The Future is Mestizo* (2000) demonstrates the importance of hybridity as an embodied and social experience. Elizondo's interpretation of Jesus emphasizes his socio-cultural identity as a Galilean: a hybrid identity which was at once powerful and subversive. While socio-cultural hybridity is the issue here, the experience of hybridity is inevitably tied to bodily human reality.

The challenge for Christian theology, in engaging the cyborg, is not to demonstrate its rationality, but to demonstrate its capability for inclusivity and beneficence for all humans, posthumans, and nonhumans who together inhabit God's creation. I have considered briefly the Christological implications to the incarnation and generally embodiment, if we extend systematically implications of the cyborg. The cyborg Christ, the hybrid reality of divine humanity, is creature – in a theological context which no longer needs to protect the divine nature from material corruption (because we

do not need the substance philosophy to back up the the notion of person), can be heard in a wholly redemptive way; creature is no longer the opposite of God, or, to put it differently, we creatures are not doomed to relate to God as God's opposition.

We might consider also Jesus as a „trickster figure" – Jesus as an active participant, rather than a passive resource, in our theological and Christological constructions, an agent who is a shape shifter, who might trouble our notions – all of them: classical, biblical, scientific, modernist, postmodernist, and feminist – of the human-, while making us remember why we cannot want this problematic universal. Just as Christ's relation to God is part of his (post)humanity, so too we can hope to redraw the boundaries of our human subjectivity to include a relation to God in which our wills coincide and indeed become indistinguishable. This indwelling of the Spirit, this ontological relation, this desirable permeability between the boundaries of self and God, is modeled for us in the ultimate human, the cyborg Christ, who invites us, too, to participate in the life of God (Kull 2001).

Haraway is narrating her science facts and fictions in the context of academy, Octavia Butler and several others are doing the same critical work via science fiction writing, and some people do the same via their art. Lynn Randolph has painted in response to Haraways essays, and Haraway has commented on her paintings. Another sister in technoculture, "a co-worker committed to taking "naturescultures" seriously without the soporific seductions of a return to Eden or the palpitating frisson of a jeremiad warning of the coming technological Apocalypse" (Haraway 2007), as Haraway describes her, is also an Australian artist Patricia Piccinini. Piccinini's objects are replete with narrative speculative fabulation. Her visual and sculptural art is about worlding, i.e., "naturalcultural" worlds at stake, worlds needy for care and response, worlds full of unsettling but oddly familiar creatures who turn out to be simultaneously near kin and alien colonists. Piccinini's worlds – as Haraway's own – require curiosity, emotional engagement, and investigation, and they do not yield to clean judgments or bottom lines – especially not about what is living or nonliving, organic or technological, promising or threatening.

Piccinini's worlds are full of youngsters – including pink and blue truck babies promising to tell where grown-up trucks come from, ambiguously fetal-like transgenics in Science Story, trusting kids with believable-unbelievable creatures. Could the worlds of technoculture ever come to be quiet country? It depends, Piccinini seems to suggest, depends on love, care, courage, inspiration, solidarity, and justice.

Most of Piccinini's work are premised on bioscientific practices of manipulation and alteration of living beings, of creating "new Worlds" if only "in art". What is the heritage for which technocultural beings are both accountable and indebted? What must the practices of love look like in this tangled wild/quiet country? Piccinini's essay, "In Another Life" (www.patriciapiccinini.net), poses the question of care in words, "I am particularly fascinated by the unexpected consequences, the stuff we don't want but must somehow accommodate. There is no question as to whether there will be undesired outcomes, my interest is in whether we will be able to love them." At her 2003 lecture at the Tokyo University of Fine Art, Piccinini laid out her large, queer, non- hetero-normative view of our technocultural family: "In my work, perhaps I am saying that whether you like them or you don't like them, we actually have a duty to care. We created them, so we've got to look after them." Looking after imperfect, messy, really existing, mortal beings is much more demanding – not to mention playful, intellectually interesting, and emotionally satisfying – than living the futuristic nightmare of techno-immortality.

People of technoculture have a familial, generational duty to their failures, as well as their accomplishments. Natural or not, good or not, safe or not, the creatures of technoculture make a body-and-soul changing claim on their "creators" that is rooted in the generational obligation of and capacity for responsive attentiveness. To care is to know how to nurture our creatures and co-creators through the often unexpected generations, not to point toward future utopia or dystopia. But reconciliation is not guaranteed. What is guaranteed is that nature and culture are tightly knotted in bodies, ecologies, technologies, and times, we are dependent on our companion species, real and fictional (dogs, angels, and one may extend

the list…). Cyborg as a symbol and a figuration, a promise and a threat, for our time and our being can be talked about rationally – one does not need to invoke some further authority or arcane personal experience, cyborg-being is already our daily experience at least in its low-tech versions (starting with eyeglasses and all other kinds of compensating, restorative, or normalizing and very intimate organic-mechanic relations). Perhaps the concept of cyborg can be falsified or substituted by something more fitting in the future. But that is not the point. Rather, can we live up to this critical love and hope Haraway and Piccinini are calling us in relation to our creations?

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